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REMARKS

Claims 1-9, 11-14, and 16-25 are all the claims presently pending in the application. Claims 1-6, 8, 11-13, and 16-24 have been amended to more clearly define the invention. Claims 1, 16, 20, and 23-24 are independent.

Applicant appreciates the courtesies extended to the Applicant's representative during the personal interview on April 22, 2004. During the personal interview, the Examiner agreed that the above-amendments overcome the applied references.

These amendments are made only to more particularly point out the invention for the Examiner and not for narrowing the scope of the claims or for any reason related to a statutory requirement for patentability.

Applicant also notes that, notwithstanding any claim amendments herein or later during prosecution, Applicant's intent is to encompass equivalents of all claim elements.

Entry of this §1.116 Amendment is proper. Since the Amendments above narrow the issues for appeal and since such features and their distinctions over the prior art of record were discussed earlier, such amendments do not raise a new issue requiring a further search and/or consideration by the Examiner. As such, entry of this Amendment is believed proper and Applicant earnestly solicits entry. No new matter has been added.

The Examiner alleges that claims 2-5, 7, 13, 19, and 21-22 are indefinite. In particular, the Examiner alleges that there is insufficient antecedent basis for a limitation in the claims. While Applicant submits that such would be clear to one of ordinary skill in the art taking the present Application as a whole, to speed prosecution claims 2 and 4 have been amended in

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accordance with Examiner Luu's very helpful suggestions. This amendment clarifies that "said associating" at line 5, claim 2 and line 1 of claim 4 refers to "associating" in line 10 of claim 1.

In view of the foregoing, the Examiner is respectfully requested to withdraw this rejection.

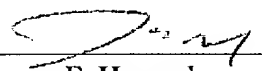
In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicant respectfully submits that claims 1-9, 11-14 and 16-25, all the claims presently pending in the Application, are patentably distinct over the prior art of record and are in condition for allowance. The Examiner is respectfully requested to pass the above application to issue at the earliest possible time.

Should the Examiner find the Application to be other than in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned at the local telephone number listed below to discuss any other changes deemed necessary in a telephonic or personal interview.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any deficiency in fees or to credit any overpayment in fees to Attorney's Deposit Account No. 50-0510.

Respectfully Submitted,

Date: 7/23/04


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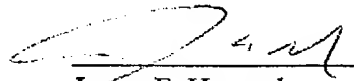
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CERTIFICATION OF FACSIMILE TRANSMISSION

I hereby certify that I am filing this After-Final Amendment by facsimile with the United States Patent and Trademark Office to Examiner Sy D. Luu, Group Art Unit 2174 at fax number (703) 872-9306 this 23rd day of April, 2004.



James E. Howard

Reg. No. 39,715

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